

Mrs. John L. Darragh House
519 15th Street
Galveston
Galveston County
Texas

HABS No. TX-2104

HABS
TEX
84-GALV,
21-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS NO. Tx-2104

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MRS. JOHN L. DARRAGH HOUSE

Location: 519 15th Street, Galveston, Galveston County, Texas.

Owner: Ruth Stanton

Occupant: Apartment residents.

Significance: The house was built for the wife of John L. Darragh, prominent businessman of Galveston. It is an example of the Queen Anne style in the city.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1888. Alfred Muller, noted Galveston architect, designed this residence which in effect was the combination of two older houses. Remodeling of the two dwellings created the present structure. Cost of the work was almost \$8,000. The building was finished in the fall of 1888. It was well furnished and fully carpeted by Mrs. Darragh at that time. Muller also designed the cast iron fence on the property.
2. Architect: Alfred Muller, architect.
3. Builder: R. Zinke.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

John L. Darragh came to Galveston about the year 1843. Very little is known about his private life as he remained very much to himself. His business activities were many as he invested heavily in stocks and bonds. He amassed quite a fortune in Galveston by this means; his estate including numerous real estate properties in the city was valued at \$250,000 at his death in 1892.

Darragh was frugal to the point of being considered miserly and aside from his business transactions, and had no social life. He held some positions of importance at various times principally the presidency of the Galveston Wharf Company and of the Galveston City Company, and a directorship of the former.

In 1888, following a noticeable change in his actions, he was declared by the courts as "insane" although not committed to an institution. Following that time he lived principally in the east until his death several years later.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Galveston, Texas. Rosenberg Library. Galveston County Manuscript Collection. John L. Darragh Papers.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Galveston News. March 28 to April 1, 1893.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.
Director
Galveston Architecture Inventory
March 23, 1967

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The house is a two story frame structure with a double gallery across the east front. An octagonal tower at the northeast corner and polygonal bay windows at the southeast corner are noticeable features.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The main block is approximately 41' x 58' including the depth of the gallery.
2. Foundations: The foundation is composed of brick piers with arched supports between; stuccoed in imitation of stone with heavy horizontal joints and decorative keystones. Arched openings filled with lattice.
3. Wall construction: Frame; exterior weatherboarded.
4. Porches: A five-bay double gallery extends across the east front of the house. The six columns are octagonal in section and extend the full height of the gallery. There is a single flute in each face. The capitals are simple and typical for the period. There are no column bases. A typical balustrade with turned balusters is provided on both floors.

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5. Chimneys: One brick chimney with two flues was provided on the outside of the north wall of the northeast corner room, the sitting room. A second chimney was on the west or back wall of the back parlor.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance door is modern.
 - b. Windows: The windows are two-over-two light and one-over-one light double-hung wood sash. Original shutters are gone.
7. Roof: Two existing structures were joined to form the nucleus for the house and the two separate hipped roofs were retained. The section on the north half of the building is topped by a flat deck. Slate shingles are original.
8. Cupola: A square cupola with two windows on each of four sides is capped with a small hipped roof with slate shingles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: Basic plan is the central hall type with two flanking rooms. Additional rooms form a rear ell.

On entering the central hall the sitting room is located on the right and the parlor on the left with the dining room adjoining the former and the back parlor adjoining the latter. A rear hall adjoins the central hall. All of these rooms open into each other with double-sliding doors.

A large bay window projects from the south wall of the parlor and one slightly smaller from the north wall of the dining room. An octagonal tower projects from the northeast corner of the sitting room.

In studying the floor plan, it appears that the two north rooms, the sitting room and dining room, were at one time a separate structure. The central hall, rear hall, parlor and back parlor seem to have made up a separate structure also. The projection of the sitting room onto the gallery substantiates this theory. The several rooms of the rear ell were probably constructed at the time the house was remodeled in 1888.

2. Stairway: The stair is located on the north wall of the central hall and is a winding stair with polygonal newel post and typical rail and turned balustrade.
3. Floors: Wood throughout.

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4. Wall and ceiling finish: Presently papered; plywood wainscot.
5. Doors: Four panel molded doors exist throughout.
6. Trim: Molded trim around all openings.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Hardware: Mortice locks.
 - b. Lighting: Modern electric fixtures.
 - c. Heating: Modern, natural gas.

D. Site:

1. Orientation and general setting: House faces east of Fifteenth Street.
2. Enclosure: A handsome cast iron fence surrounds the property. The massive gate posts are notable. Alfred Muller, architect for the house, designed the fence.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.
Director
Galveston Architecture Inventory
March 23, 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Galveston Survey was jointly sponsored by the National Park Service, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation and the Galveston Historical Foundation Inc., and developed under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The historical data was written by John C. Garner, Jr., acting as the Director of the Galveston Architecture Inventory. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by Allen Stross in the summer of 1967.